

# The President's Health

## An Appraisal of His Decision to Stay In Washington With Worrisome Cough

By JAMES RESTON

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, March 7—President Eisenhower finds himself in an unusual position today. Instead of being criticized for leaving Washington too much, he is being urged by his associates and even by his critics to go away into the sunshine for his health.

The President has been trying unsuccessfully to shake a cough for six weeks. Despite constant medication, he has been barking and straining his system during most of this time, and his hearing has been impaired by an inflammation of the left ear.

This was all so apparent at the President's news conference today that the reporters almost forgot all the great issues in the world and questioned him mainly about his health, the kind of water he drinks (bottled, tap, fluoridated, or otherwise) and on a variety of trivialities.

### Prepared for Big Issues

He had boned up on a host of questions about Suez, Anglo-French relations, the future of Germany, disarmament, etc., but his health was on everybody's mind. And he either wasn't asked the big questions, or forgot about them himself when he was asked for his estimate of the situation in the Middle East.

When he was asked about going away for a rest, he left no doubt that he would like to do so, but explained in a throaty voice that with Vice President Nixon in Africa and Secretary of State Dulles in Asia, he couldn't do it.

Behind this poignant personal situation there is a serious problem of Government. The Administration has not been organized properly to deal effectively with the mounting problems of governing under a President who must guard his health and spend a considerable time away from the Capital.

General Eisenhower himself has defined this problem more accurately than anybody else. He was perfectly candid with the people before he was nominated and re-elected.

"It would be idle to pretend that my health can be wholly restored to the excellent state in which the doctors believed it to be in mid-September (1955), he announced publicly in January of 1956. "My future life must be carefully regulated to avoid excessive fatigue . . ."

When he announced his candidacy for a second term, he told the nation:

"Readiness to obey the laws out of respect to my present duties and responsibilities is a duty in my case. I am now doing so and I intend to continue to do so."

ity for pacifying the Middle East, and is now getting more deeply involved in the problems of Africa.

This trend toward total involvement in the affairs of the whole world may be inescapable, but the cumulative effect of all this on the President and on Secretary of State Dulles, who has had to carry the main burden in the Middle East, is becoming increasingly obvious.

Mr. Dulles was asked a question at his new conference on Wednesday about the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization meeting in Australia. His reply indicates the problem created by an overwhelming work-load that Mr. Dulles does not seem to be able to share with others.

"I am not aware of that," he said. "I have not as yet had a chance to study the agenda for the SEATO conference. I am leaving for that tomorrow, as perhaps you know, and my documentation is going to be on the plane. I am not yet quite fully versed as to what my come up there."

Neither the responsibilities in the field of foreign affairs nor the facts of the President's health are temporary. Both problems are likely to continue for the next four years. The President has been away from Washington thirty-nine of the 121 days since the election, and should be away again, but he is staying here because the Vice President and the Secretary of State are away on missions that could have been delegated to others.

### Only the Beginning

As to the calendar of conferences and meetings, visitations and speeches, these are just beginning, with Prime Minister Harold Macmillan of Britain next on the list in Bermuda, and after that, Prime Minister Konrad Adenauer of West Germany.

Fortunately, the State Department has been strengthened by the addition of Christian A. Herter, who spent his first full day as Acting Secretary today, and C. Douglas Dillon, the Deputy Under Secretary for economic affairs. When they have mastered their jobs, they will be in a position to relieve Mr. Dulles of some of his burdens if he will let them.

There is also still the possibility that Gen. Walter Bedell Smith will be brought into the White House to assist the President with foreign affairs questions there. General Eisenhower proposed this late last year, but dropped it when Herbert Hoover, former Under Secretary of State, protested.

Regardless of whether these